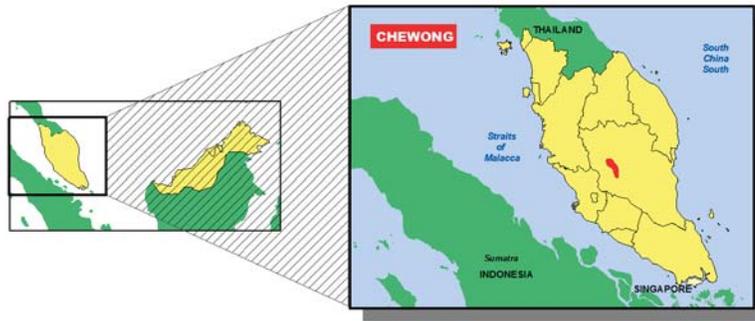


# CHEWONG



Population	Major Religion	Language
400	Animism	Chewong

## Who are the Chewong?

The Chewong are one of the nineteen original Orang Asli people groups living in Peninsular Malaysia. They belong to the Senoi subgroup. They are actually known as Siwang, but Chewong is a more familiar name because this is how people know them.

The Chewong are found in groups living near the villages of other races and those still living in the jungles. Their settlements are located in the Raub district of Pahang, Perak, Selangor, and Johor.

## What are their lives like?

The deep forest areas constitute the Chewong's environment. The forest is a cool place that provides the basis for their subsistence, is a barrier for diseases, and affords relief from the heat of the villages. While some of the Chewong live near Malay villages, others still live deep in the rainforest and live off hunting, fishing, and collecting forest produce.

The Chewong are mainly farmers and hunters. They live close to, or within, forested areas where they engage in hill rice cultivation and grow a little tobacco. Cassava is planted all around the field to deter animals that might otherwise ruin the highly valued rice crops. Small manioc gardens are maintained in the forest and provide supplies for hunter-gatherers. They also trade in petai, durian, rattan, and resins to earn cash incomes. The Chewong men hunt pig, deer, and bear while women catch tortoises, monitor lizards, and porcupines. Women also help make and inspect pig traps in the field. Fishing is carried out in rivers and streams, with hooks, nets, and poison. Fishing by hand brings in the best catch.

Chewong's settlements or camps move and follow

the cycles of land clearing. Each residential unit is the nuclear family or the families of one household, and includes two to six individuals. The extended family is economically self-sufficient and politically independent.

## What do they believe?

The Chewong believe in the existence of numerous evil spirits that can be kept away by building campfires. One spirit greatly feared by the Chewong is the *bas*, which they believe attacks the human soul for its food. Religious rituals are closely linked to their use of the forest. There are no specific ritual areas but there are traditionally dangerous places, dangerous species, and dangerous periods. Big ceremonies take place wherever there are strong mythological associations.

These associations entail many taboos regarding animals and plants found everywhere in the forest. There is no religious leader and any individual may use trance and chanting to communicate with these spirits, which are an integral part of the human environment.

## What are their needs?

Development projects are taking away forested areas where the Chewong once thrived. Pray for adequate government protection for the environment that the Chewong live in will be developed and implemented. Pray also that social ministry will arise from among believers to help meet the needs of the Chewong.